

IN THE CLAIMS:

Amend the claims as follows.

Claims 1-62. (Canceled)

63. (Currently Amended) ~~A polynucleic acid~~ An isolated HCV polynucleic acid

which is chosen from the group consisting of:

- (i) the nucleotide sequence comprising SEQ ID NO:51,
- (ii) a nucleotide sequence comprising at least 60 contiguous nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:51 and
- (iii) the complement of the polynucleic acid of (i) or (ii).

64. (Currently Amended) ~~A polynucleic acid~~ An isolated HCV polynucleic acid

which is selected from:

- (i) a polynucleic acid encoding an HCV polyprotein comprising in its Core/E1 amino acid sequence at least one of the following amino acid residues:G217 and C252, with said notation being composed of a letter representing the amino acid residue by its one-letter code, and a number representing the amino acid numbering of the HCV polyprotein,

~~(iii)~~ (ii) or the complement of the polynucleic acid of (i).

65. (Currently Amended) ~~A polynucleic acid~~ An isolated HCV polynucleic acid

which is selected from:

(i) a polynucleic acid encoding an HCV polyprotein comprising an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NOs: 52, 138, 155, 174, and 190,

(iii) or the complement of the polynucleic acid of (i).

66. (Previously Presented) A recombinant polypeptide encoded by a polynucleic acid according to any of claims 63 to 65.

67. (Previously Presented) A method for production of a recombinant polypeptide, comprising:

-transformation of an appropriate cellular host with a recombinant vector, in which a polynucleic acid according to any of claims 63 to 65 has been inserted under the control of the appropriate regulatory elements, the polynucleic acid thus being an insert,

-culturing said transformed cellular host under conditions enabling the expression of said insert, and

-harvesting said polypeptide.

68. (Previously Presented) A recombinant expression vector comprising a polynucleic acid according to any of claims 63 to 65 operably linked to prokaryotic, eukaryotic or viral transcription and translation control elements.

69. (Currently Amended) ~~A host cell~~ An isolated host cell transformed with a

recombinant vector according to claim 68.

70. (Previously Presented) An isolated peptide encoded by a polynucleic acid according to any of claims 64 to 65.